

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) – joined by CAPAC Health Task Force Chair Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU) – today issued the following statement in recognition of National Public Health Week:

Rep. Mike Honda:

“I applaud the American Public Health Association and its 200-plus partner organizers and sponsors, who for the past eleven years have organized ‘National Public Health Week’. This year, the theme is: ‘Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids.’

“The environments in which children live create challenges to their health, education and housing quality. As CAPAC Chair, I am particularly concerned about such environmental impact on minority communities. Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, African Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives and Latinos, are more likely to live, work, and play in environments which have detrimental health effects, often vastly disproportionate to their percentage of the population.

“Last year, I introduced the Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act of 2005 (H.R. 3561) which, if enacted, would address the pressing health care needs of these communities. The bill and its Senate companion (S. 1580) introduced by Sen. Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), are of paramount importance and ought to be passed and presented to the President for his signature with dispatch.

“Amongst their provisions, the bills would expand health coverage for the 45 million uninsured, more than half of whom are racial and ethnic minorities, offer linguistically and culturally relevant health services, expand and create new programs to address the shortage of minority health care providers and strengthen health institutions that serve minority populations.

“I am pleased that the American Public Health Association – the leading public health organization in the U.S. – the links between health and the environments in which our children live, and hope that this recognition is integrated into the national public health debate.”

Rep. Bordallo:

“National Public Health Week, 2006 highlights the harmful effects that structures like buildings, roads and sidewalks can have on the health of children everywhere. We heard from communities that not only addressed challenges in their built environments but also provided solutions to improving them. Many of the points discussed today also parallel CAPAC’s mission of providing quality health care for minority communities, as children in minority communities are affected by poor urban planning and lack of safe environments. Town hall meetings are now being held by representatives across the country that have implemented solutions to these problems. These efforts are the first big step in building safer housing developments for all families and communities.”